
Zoochosis

"It was the sadness in their eyes that has continued to haunt us."

—STEPHANIE SANTANA AND SHAUWN LUKOSE

Keep animals in zoos! We don't think so. There is documented research that many animals removed from their natural habitat and kept in captivity have developed a kind of mental illness known as zoochosis.

Animals with this disease often pace back and forth, twist their necks, bob their heads up and down, turn in never-ending circles, and even tear holes in their own skin. Can you imagine being so miserable that you would want to inflict harm on yourself?

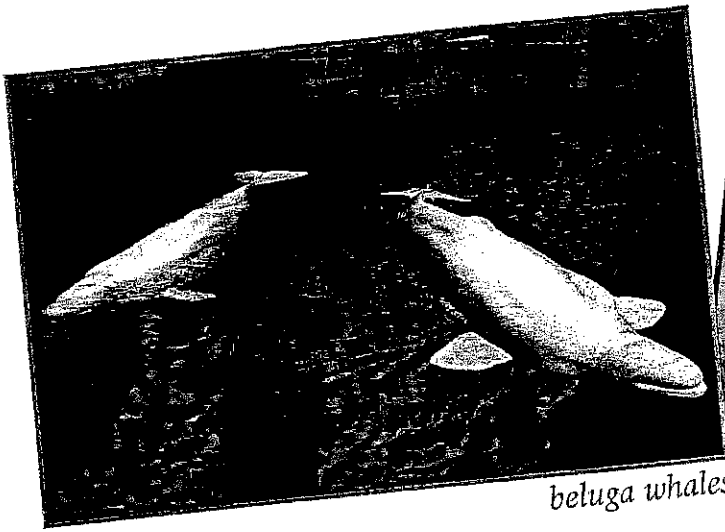


pacing tiger

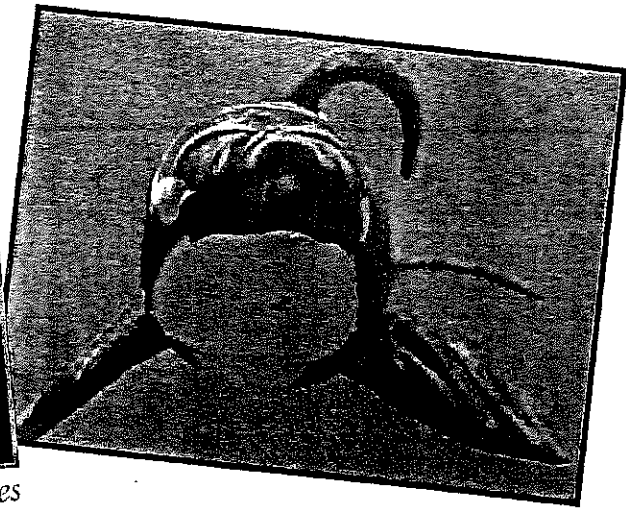
Once, when we visited a zoo, we noticed that some of the animals kept in cages were grabbing onto the bars and shaking them. If you could have looked into these animals' eyes like we did, you would have seen deep sadness. It is this sadness that continues to haunt us to this day.

It has been documented that Junior, a killer whale, was removed from his natural habitat in Iceland and placed in a tank in Niagara Falls. He died four years later, deprived of outside air, sunlight, and companionship.

Junior is not alone. There are many aquatic animals that are taken from their natural habitats and placed in water tanks in



beluga whales



orca

aquariums around the world. These animals are separated from their families and are forced to live in groups that are nothing like their own families. As though that isn't enough, animals like whales and dolphins, who are accustomed to swimming up to 100 miles in one day and diving hundreds of feet, are forced to live in confined spaces. Do you think they can get this type of exercise in a water tank? We don't think so.

Wait! There's more. Aquatic animals have a special way of talking to one another and finding their prey. They use sound patterns, or echolocation. This natural process is sometimes non-existent in aquariums because of the noise level and the glass enclosures. This type of confinement is unacceptable for any animal, anywhere.

The Born Free Foundation performed a worldwide study of zoos which revealed that zoochosis is rampant in confined animals around the globe. Another study found that elephants in zoos spend 22 percent of their time engaging in abnormal behaviors, such as repeated head bobbing or biting cage bars, and bears spend about 30 percent of their time pacing, a sign of distress.

Although zoos claim that their main purpose is to help prevent animals from becoming extinct and to help educate people about animals, we think the only thing zoos do is make animals crazy!

